



*Washington
Department of*
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

2003 Recreational License Change Proposals

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Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

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Executive Summary

The Washington State Legislature through Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6387 Sec. 307(22) directed the Fish and Wildlife Commission to, “evaluate the adequacy, structure, and amount of fees for hunting and fishing licenses and make recommendations for revision of the fee structure and schedule as appropriate.” Based on staff research and public input, the Fish and Wildlife Commission recommends eleven recreational license changes for consideration by the Governor and the 2003 Legislature.

The eleven proposed changes include new fees attached to certain fishing and hunting privileges as well as fee increases applied to specific license types. Several of the proposed licensing changes involve a choice on the part of the recreational enthusiast and are not mandatory. Other recommended changes are simply mandatory price increases. Throughout the license review, the Commission was mindful of license affordability, species type, participation levels and prices of equivalent license types in neighboring and other states in the region and country. The appendices to this report include quantitative data that compares relevant demographic, geographic, participation, and price information.

The proposed licensing changes include license fee appreciation (tied to inflation), raffles for permanent annual licenses, youth education and recreation donations, Wildlife Stewardship decals, temporary fishing license choices, catch record card fees, shellfish license fee increase, senior fishing license increase, charge for initial turkey tags, Western Washington pheasant licenses, and multiple season big game licenses. Each of these recommended changes are further detailed later in this report. If all the changes recommended by the Commission were approved by the Governor and 2003 Legislature, an additional 4 to 6 million in revenue is estimated to result. Both the State Wildlife Fund and State General Fund would benefit from these proposed fee changes.

Introduction

This study and report results from the Legislature's directive in the 2002 Supplemental Operating Budget to the Fish and Wildlife Commission to, "evaluate the adequacy, structure, and amount of fees for hunting and fishing licenses and make recommendations for revision of the fee structure and schedule as appropriate." (See ESSB 6387 Sec. 307(22)).

The Commission developed these proposals using information provided by WDFW staff. This Commission's proposals were presented at a series of six public meetings in Eastern and Western Washington. The meetings were held in Spokane, Vancouver, Mill Creek, Yakima, Wenatchee and Montesano. These meetings were publicized in local newspapers, on the radio and on WDFW's Internet site. A range of 12-73 citizens attended the meetings to voice their opinions about the presented proposals and to offer their own suggestions. In addition, the proposals were posted on the Internet. Taken together WDFW received hundreds of electronic, written, and oral comments.

Citizens stated at every meeting that they would like increased hunting and fishing fees to be matched by greater fishing and hunting opportunity. Citizens and association representatives were also more favorable towards the proposals where participation was voluntary. Consistently across the state, fishers and hunters indicated that the Department should be doing more to get youth involved in outdoor recreation activities. This included expanded access to hunter education classes.

Recreational fishers and hunters expressed skepticism that the additional revenues generated from license fee increases would actually benefit the Department and resource management. The fear is that other funds supporting the Department will continue to be reduced. Fishers and hunters are aware of recent budget decisions made by the Governor and Legislature to shift State General Fund expenditures to the State Wildlife Fund. Fee increases were generally more acceptable to them if increased revenue actually stayed with the Department and benefited the management of fish and wildlife. In no case did the public indicate it was acceptable to increase license fees at the expense of the State Wildlife Fund to benefit the State General Fund.

Proposed Recreational License Fee Changes

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission is proposing a set of 11 recreational license changes and has identified other proposals that require more research before there is further consideration by state policy makers. The Fish and Wildlife Commission recognizes the fiscal reality facing state government and the inherent difficulty with increasing fees. Setting the State General Fund crisis aside, the Commission was already concerned with the long-term health of the State Wildlife Fund and the Department. Hunting and fishing license sales are volatile and can increase and decrease based on weather, prior year harvest levels as well as other factors. The erosion of State General Fund support of the Department places greater pressure on the Wildlife Fund and further complicates the health of the Wildlife Fund. Geographic factors, demographic variables, relative financial levels and participation trends were all considered¹ while developing these proposed license fee changes.

Washington has the highest density of hunters west of the Rocky Mountains and the second highest density of anglers². This is not surprising given the fact that geographically, Washington is the smallest state in the West³. These facts coupled with Washington's relatively high nonresident hunting fees lead to a low level of nonresident participation when compared to other states.

The participation rates of anglers and hunters in Washington has declined by six and eight percent in the last decade. This is similar to the four and seven percent decreases experienced by the U.S., as a whole, during this period⁴. Conversely, the average number of days spent fishing per angler in Washington increased by eight percent from 1991 to 2001.

¹ Please see the appendices for a more complete comparison of these variables.

² Sportsmen density is defined as the estimated number of hunters or anglers per square mile. Another potential method would be to measure the number of anglers per mile of tidal shoreline and square mile of other surface water; however, this introduces comparability questions between coastal and inland states. The estimated number of hunters and anglers originate from the USFWS 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife -Associated Recreation.

³ "The West" in this case is defined as the states west of the Continental Divide.

⁴ Participation of fishing increased at a higher rate, on average, than the US population as a whole during the last forty-six years; whereas, hunting participation increased at a similar rate as the increase of human population during this period. It is only in the last ten to fifteen years that fishing and hunting participation rates have leveled off. USFWS 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

The range of estimated revenue generated by each proposed change results from the approach chosen to implement each fee increase. Buyers resistance and costs to implement each change have been subtracted from gross revenues.

	Resident	Nonresident
Freshwater Fishing		
Washington	\$ 20.00	\$ 40.00
West Average	\$ 19.36	\$ 47.56
USA Average	\$ 15.23	\$ 38.44
Deer Hunting		
Washington	\$ 36.00	\$ 360.00
West Average	\$ 32.68	\$ 241.30
USA Average	\$ 26.05	\$ 168.48
Elk Hunting		
Washington	\$ 36.00	\$ 360.00
West Average	\$ 70.89	\$ 351.13
USA Average	\$ 91.92	\$ 319.09

Figure 1. Relative Hunting and Fishing Fees

Washington's resident freshwater fishing fees are similar to the average for the West; however, the nonresident fees are less than the western average. Deer hunting is relatively expensive in Washington when compared to both the western states and the U.S. as a whole. On the other hand, elk hunting fees are very inexpensive for Washington residents and equivalent to other states for nonresidents⁵.

During the recent past some license fees have increased and others have decreased. From 1985 to 2001, the real value of the resident adult major licenses (i.e., hunting, fishing, etc.) has decreased 45%⁶. This means that inflation has eroded nearly half the purchasing power of license generated fee revenues in a sixteen-year period.

⁵ A detailed comparison of fishing and hunting fees is located in the appendix.

⁶ This measures the real price of the resident adult license prices adjusted for inflation using the Seattle Consumer Price Index. Any comparison in price must be evaluated in light of the differences in opportunity and quality of the experience.

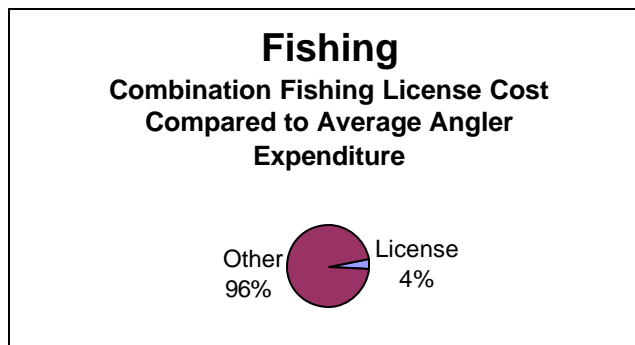


Figure 2. Average Annual Angler Expenditure Relative to Combination Fishing License Fee

Fishing and hunting fees are just one of the expenditures that anglers and hunters make to participate in each respective sport. They also buy hunting and fishing equipment, pay for hotel rooms and purchase magazine subscriptions. A hunter buying a deer or elk hunting license would spend 2% of his or her overall hunting expenditures on the license. Similarly an angler purchasing a resident combination fishing license would spend 4% of his or her overall fishing expenditure on the combination fishing license.⁷

Overall, Washington hunters, anglers and wildlife-watchers spent an estimated 2.3 billion dollars in direct expenditures in Washington State in 2001⁷. Only about 1.3% of the total 2001 fish and wildlife related expenditures were spent on WDFW license fees. Fishing and hunting fees is a small portion of the total amount that hunters and anglers spend to participate in fishing and hunting opportunities in Washington State.

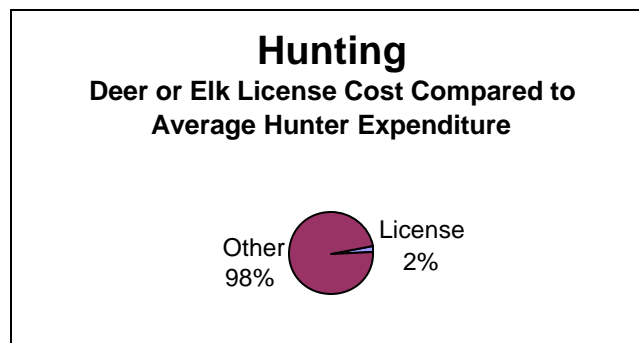


Figure 3. Average Annual Hunter Expenditure Relative to Deer or Elk Hunting License Fee

⁷ The total average expenditure is reported in USFWS National Survey

License Fee Appreciation

Description:

- Peg recreational license fees to an inflation index.
- Authorize the Commission to approve or disapprove the inflation related increase on an annual basis.

Purpose:

Maintain the real value of fish and wildlife recreational licenses.

Justification:

The real value of the WDFW's major fishing and hunting fees has decreased by almost half in the last sixteen years. This proposal would not increase the real value of fishing and hunting fees, but simply maintain the fees relative to inflation. Therefore, the purchasing power of hunting and fishing licenses would not erode over time.

The nominal increase in fees will be equal to the average annual increase in the national Implicit Price Deflator for Personal Consumption (IPD). The Bureau of Economic Analysis only develops and reports the IPD at the national level. The estimated average annual inflation rate for the FY98-05 period is only two percent. This two percent inflation estimate is much more conservative and representative of the entire state than the Seattle based CPI whose annual average percentage change in inflation was nearly 50% higher for the same period.

IMPLICIT PRICE DEFLATOR

Fiscal Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Percentage Change	1.4%	1.2%	2.2%	2.5%	1.3%	2.3%	2.7%	2.5%

Public reaction to this proposal was mixed. On the positive side, the public saw this as a simple way to maintain the Department's purchasing power. Conversely, many people reacted against this simply because it would increase nominal fees. Some citizens were concerned that fees would automatically increase without oversight, hence the proposed annual review by the Commission.

Legislation: Required

Estimated Net Revenue: \$600,000

Raffle for Permanent Licenses

Description:

- Raffle a nominal number of permanent annual licenses⁸.

Purpose:

Promotion of fish and wildlife associated recreation.

Justification:

WDFW is developing a strategic marketing plan to promote hunting, fishing and wildlife watching. WDFW would use this raffle to promote resident and nonresident outdoor recreation. The Department plans to market this concept through its current network of approximately 600 WDFW Dealers throughout the state.

Public reaction to this proposal was almost universally positive. Citizens appreciated that they had a choice to participate in the raffle and believed this was a great concept to promote outdoor recreation opportunities.

Legislation: Not required

Net Revenue: \$81,000-990,000

⁸ Since a lifetime license has not been created and is not being requested at this time, a series of annual licenses would be given as a prize.

Youth Education & Recreation Donation

Description:

- Offer the voluntary opportunity for each customer to donate one dollar or more during the license transaction towards the dedicated purpose of youth outdoor education and recreation.

Purpose:

Create a secure funding source to support a WDFW partnership with the Washington Wildlife Federation (WWF) and its affiliate the Washington Wildlife Coalition, to implement the Outdoor Recreation Initiative “Go Play Outside”.

Justification:

This approach is felt to be an effective way to engage today’s youth in fishing, shell fishing, hunting, shooting sports, and wildlife watching. The direct empowerment of non-profit groups and businesses committed to sharing outdoor recreation skills and ethics with youth should enhance the success of the programs.

This approach to funding and delivering program services to the public is both new and innovative. WDFW is not seeking increased funding or staffing levels from the legislature to implement “Go Play Outside” activities. Instead, the Washington Wildlife Federation has a contract with WDFW to produce, market, and sell “Go Play Outside” products with resulting income intended to fully support those activities.

The WWF has created an affiliate called the Washington Wildlife Coalition with the objective of implementing youth outdoor recreation/conservation education via the “Go Play Outside” initiative. This approach takes advantage of interested non-profit groups and outdoor recreation businesses.

This proposal will directly fund this coalition of organizations whose explicit purpose is to share the recreational traditions of fishing, shell fishing, hunting, shooting sports and wildlife watching with the youth of Washington. The coalition will use clinics, workshops, promotional and informational products, youth camps, mentoring programs, and outreach efforts to engage and educate youth.

The Youth Outdoor Recreation Education Donation system is a key element for funding our partners to implement the objectives and goals of the “Go Play Outside” program on behalf of the state.

Public reaction to this proposal at all six meeting was unanimous in support. Comments favored an approach that did not limit donations. The concept of funding going to support an external non-profit delivery system was endorsed by the public who attended the meetings.

Legislation: Not required

Net Revenue: \$30,000

Wildlife Stewardship Decal

Description:

- Replace the current Conservation Patron (\$20) with a Wildlife Stewardship Decal (\$25), which includes a vehicle use permit.
- Continue the current vehicle use permit being bundled with hunting and fishing licenses.

Purpose:

Increase donations to support wildlife watching activities. Create a greater incentive to make a donation.

Justification:

A revenue source for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife would be created to develop watchable wildlife opportunities in cooperation with local, state and federal agencies and NGOs. Authority is provided to the Department to sell a watchable wildlife decal and to deposit the proceeds into a dedicated account in the State Wildlife Fund. The proceeds would be dedicated to the support of watchable wildlife activities. Of the \$25 fee, \$15 would go to support fish and wildlife appreciation and \$10 would continue to go to support Department access sites.

According to a 2001 US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Related Recreation source, wildlife viewing contributes about \$1 billion to Washington's economy annually, mostly occurring in rural areas. This is without any significant activities to manage for wildlife viewing and viewers. Currently, limited funding is available to manage activities that enhance wildlife viewing, and increase business in rural economies. This watchable wildlife decal will be promoted and marketed to patrons of wildlife viewing, through the Department's web page, licensing sales activities, articles in sportsmen's and other conservation-oriented organization's newsletters, radio advertising and other effective methods. Special promotional activities would be used to enhance the experiences of wildlife viewers.

Legislation: Required

Net Revenue: \$30,000

Temporary Fishing License Change

Description:

- Create a one to five consecutive day temporary combination fishing license⁹ that will replace the current two-day temporary fishing license.
- The fee for residents will be half the fee for nonresidents.

PROPOSED PRICE (before dealer and transaction fees)

	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days
Resident	\$6	\$9	\$11.50	\$13.50	\$15
Nonresident	\$12	\$18	\$23	\$27	\$30

Purpose:

Create a flexible temporary fishing license that is equivalent in price to national average price per day.

Justification:

This fee structure provides flexible fishing license options.

NATIONAL AVERAGE PRICE

	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days
Resident	\$6.88	\$10.52	\$15.50	\$27.50	\$5
Nonresident	\$8.58	\$10.14	\$15.70	\$21.26	\$15.33

Temporary fishing license options available to anglers are increased, while the increase in the fee for additional days diminishes.

These fee increases being discussed here for both resident and nonresident licenses are similar to those proposed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to go before the Oregon Legislature for adoption in January.

Legislation: Required

Net Revenue: \$860,000

⁹The temporary license will continue to be invalid for the lowland lakes opener as is the case with the current temporary license.

Catch Record Card Improvement

Description:

- Create a species-specific catch record card (CRC) endorsement (maintain the current card for all five species).
- Charge a fee up to one dollar for each CRC species endorsement.

Purpose:

Increase harvest management information and reduce sampling costs.

Justification:

Catch Record Cards are used to produce sport harvest estimates for Dungeness crab, salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and Puget Sound halibut. License changes over the years to simplify the system have put a greater burden on the agency to maintain quality harvest information. CRCs were previously separate documents for recording an angler's salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, or halibut catch, but were combined in 2000 to a single document with Dungeness crab added.

Anglers may now obtain a free CRC whether or not they intend to fish for any of the five species groups on the card. This substantially increases the number of cards issued. Additionally, there is no way to distinguish a salmon angler from a crabber which means that in order to produce salmon catch estimates, persons who intended to fish only for crab must be included in the salmon random sample. Charging a fee would introduce a small economic disincentive for customers to take CRCs that they don't intend to use.

Harvest for some of the less popular species, for example, sturgeon and halibut, are difficult to assess because the populations are diminishing over time. Sampling of card holders who never intended to fish for the CRC species effectively reduces the accuracy and precision of the harvest estimates while it increases the quantity of mailed reminders sent to anglers, increases telephone survey costs, increases processing costs, and increases program management costs.

The general public reaction to the CRC fee was negative. It was seen as just another way for the Department to generate revenue rather than as an incentive for the fisher to declare his or her intent to fish for specific species. The connection to the desired improvement of harvest information (clearly understanding the species the fisher intended to fish for) and the proposed fee was not well understood.

Charging a fee will help identify anglers fishing for the different species groups, making it simpler and less costly to obtain quality harvest information. A species endorsement on the CRC will provide a mechanism to identify the cardholders and the species group they intend to harvest. This will allow WDFW the ability to conduct random samples of cardholders for each of the species groups identified.

Legislation: Required

Estimated Net Revenue: \$950,000-\$1,190,000

Shellfish Change

Description:

- Increase the \$7.00 shellfish license fees by approximately 40%.
- Create a separate annual razor clam license.

Purpose:

Increase revenue, improve customer service along the Washington coast, and provide greater efficiency in gathering managerial information.

Justification:

The cost of a shellfish license is significantly undervalued when compared to the cost of the saltwater or freshwater license. The shellfish license provides a similar broad range of recreational opportunities as the saltwater and freshwater licenses.

The creation of a separate razor clam license facilitates a number of positive benefits:

- 1) The direct number of licensed participants can be easily tracked.
- 2) Those who only participate in razor clam digging are not counted in the combination license or shellfish/seaweed license population which makes the data gathered on other species (CRC) for managerial purposes that much more accurate and cost effective.
- 3) The ability to project the number of participants provides a more accurate estimate of the potential harvest of any planned razor clam dig. This will provide greater flexibility and accuracy for estimating season length and the related number of digging days.

Legislation: Required

Net Revenue: \$350,000

Senior Fee Increase

Description:

- Raise the senior fishing fees from five dollars to ten dollars.

Purpose:

Increase revenue.

Justification:

At the ten-dollar price Washington's senior fishing fee is still less than the adult fishing license fee and is economical compared to the price that seniors pay elsewhere in the region. For example:

Resident Seniors

Oregon \$9.50 (for a 5 year license)

Idaho \$23.50 (there is no senior category)

California \$30.45 (there is no senior category)

British Columbia C\$30=USD\$20 (there is no senior category)

Legislation: Required

Net Revenue: \$230,000

Primary Turkey Tag Isolation

Description:

- Remove the primary turkey tag from the small game license and charge a fee for the resident and nonresident tags.

Youth	Resident	Nonresident
\$0	\$12	\$40

Purpose:

To increase the accuracy of hunter participation and turkey harvest estimates. Provides additional revenue to help WDFW meet its resource stewardship mission.

Justification:

Previous to 1999, hunters were required to purchase their first tag. In 1999, license reform included the first turkey tag with the small game license with subsequent tags purchased separately. The proposed change would return the licensing requirements to pre-1999 status.

Having a separate primary turkey tag aids in the regulation of turkey hunting in Washington State by making it easier to estimate both the dynamic hunter participation and the resulting pressure on the resource. Currently, it is difficult to estimate hunter participation due to the unknown number of turkey tags issued to hunters as part of their small game license package who do not intend on hunting turkeys. Those hunters with a small game license who don't intend to hunt turkey do not report under the mandatory hunter reporting system. This makes the statistical sampling for hunter participation and harvest management more difficult and expensive.

The hunting public is strongly divided on whether the turkey tag should be separated from the small game license. Members of the National Wild Turkey Federation have expressed a great desire to have the tag separated. Their belief is that the emphasis on encouraging more turkey hunters in Washington has worked and that more turkey hunters is not necessarily a good thing considering safety and ethical hunting issues that currently exist.

On the other hand, a survey of turkey hunters, completed in March 2002 by Responsive Management as part of a general hunter survey, showed that 57% of turkey hunters did not support the tag being separated and a fee charged. Forty-eight percent of the turkey hunters "strongly disagreed" with the concept. Reasons for their disagreement were not collected as part of the survey.

Legislation: Required

Net Revenue: \$130,000

Western Washington Pheasant License

Description:

- Increase fees to fully fund the Western Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program.
- Change the current card from an eight-bird punch card to a license that maintains the daily limit with an unlimited annual possibility.
- Change it so that a small game license is not necessary to hunt Western Washington Pheasant, nor can the bearer of a small game license hunt Western Washington Pheasant without a Western Washington Pheasant license.

Purpose:

To create a self-sustaining pheasant enhancement program.

Justification:

Through time, WDFW has made great improvements in program and pheasant production efficiency. Unfortunately, revenue collected through the sale of the western Washington pheasant punch card currently funds approximately 80% of the total operating costs for the program (based on 2001 budget figures). This program should be self-funded.

In addition, the punch card concept has some implementation shortfalls. It is intended to help WDFW estimate hunter participation (use and harvest) and have heavy users of the resource pay for additional use. Compliance with the punch card regulation is low. The low compliance, coupled with a low punch card return rate (approx. 25%) has made the original purposes for the card obsolete. This proposal will make it easier for hunters to be in compliance with the hunting regulations as it removes the requirement to document harvested birds on a punch card.

The following table represents changes in license costs associated with this proposal:

	Hunt W. WA Pheasant Only		Hunt W. WA Pheasant & Other Small Game	
	Small Game License	Small Game with Big Game License	Small Game License	Small Game with Big Game License
Current	\$66	\$52	\$66	\$52
Proposed	\$70	\$70	\$100	\$86
Increase	\$4	\$18	\$34	\$34

Legislation: Required

Net Revenue: \$300,000

Multiple Season Big Game License

Description:

- Creates an opportunity for hunters to hunt deer or elk during multiple seasons according to type (archery, muzzleloader, modern firearm).
- While hunters would be allowed to hunt in multiple seasons, the bag limit would remain 1 deer or 1 elk, depending on which tag they held.
- The total number of tags will be limited to 2000 and would be divided proportionally between deer and elk to remain consistent with population objectives and harvest objectives.
- Hunters will be selected through a special permit drawing.
- Fee - \$150/resident, \$1,500/non-resident.

Purpose:

Increase hunting opportunity, increase revenue, and retain ability to manage deer and elk populations.

Justification:

Hunters have expressed interest in being able to hunt deer or elk during more than one season (archery, muzzleloader, modern firearm). This type of opportunity can be provided under the controlled distribution of a limited number of tags. The most equitable way to make this opportunity available is through a drawing similar to other special deer and elk tags.

WDFW will recommend the appropriate number of deer and elk permits available for each year's drawing, up to a maximum of 2000. The number of permits will be integrated with other management decisions affecting deer and elk populations. Determining the number of permits on an annual basis retains the ability to manage for appropriate population and harvest objectives.

Public reaction was mixed at the six public meetings. On the positive side, it does generate revenue and provides hunters with an opportunity to participate in different seasons. Hunters have expressed interest in this type of opportunity in several venues, including the comment period on the recent Game Management Plan and public meetings held to set hunting seasons. On the other hand, the public thought that it might result in crowding during some seasons and may increase the level of pressure on the resource.

Legislation: Required

Net Revenue: Up To \$350,000

Items for Further Research

A few ideas were raised in this process that the Fish and Wildlife Commission has decided to study further and not to go forward with at this time. Some of the most prominent are below.

LIFETIME LICENSES

Nearly half of the states in the U.S. offer some kind of lifetime license. A lifetime license is defined as a license that gives the bearer the same privileges as an equivalent annual license for the rest of his or her natural life.

The largest benefit and drawback of this license type is that the customer is paying an up front fee to be a customer for life. Therefore, the Department needs to have the ability to price the license so that there is no decrease in the net present value of revenue by selling a customer a lifetime license rather than an annual license. Some states with a lifetime license create an interest bearing account that is drawn down during the lifetime of customer use.

A 22 state survey is being done to further study pricing, marketing and regulation issues.

FISHING GUIDE LICENSE CHANGE

Currently, the WDFW offers separate Game Fish and Salmon guide licenses. One proposal presented to the public was to combine these two licenses into a general fishing guide license that was generic across species.

Another issue was certification. The issue is whether fishing guides should have first aid/CPR training, proof of insurance and Coast Guard certification. Currently, the Department collects this information from other commercial interests but it does not require or enforce these certifications.

Additional policy issues also need to be further researched. Should WDFW be implementing these requirements for fishing guides? Second, would another agency be better suited to administer and enforce those requirements?

HUNTING GUIDE LICENSE

Washington currently has no hunting guide license. Since there are fishing guide licenses, should there be hunting guide licenses? This is an issue that needs further research to determine the merits of creating such a license.

INTERSTATE RECIPRICOCITY

This practice exists in some other regions' recreational fish and wildlife related license prices. The basic concept is that if a resident of Washington is the holder of a Washington fish and wildlife related recreational license, then he or she can purchase a similar privilege from a reciprocating state at their resident price. Conversely, a resident from a reciprocating state who

has purchased a fish and wildlife related recreational license in their state could purchase a similar Washington privilege for the resident price.

This concept may increase resident and nonresident participation by increasing the incentives to residents who currently only purchase other states nonresident licenses and increase the participation of nonresidents from reciprocating states.

To make this concept work, a high degree of interstate cooperation would be needed. The fish and wildlife agencies in other states would need to be approached and formal agreements developed. Moreover, the case studies of other states would need to be analyzed.

WILDLIFE WATCHING EXCISE TAX

More than one citizen was concerned that fishing and hunting equipment was being taxed in order to help fund the conservation and regulation of Washington's fish and wildlife (Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robert taxes) while wildlife-watching equipment was not being taxed to provide a funding source for non-consumptive activities.

Not only is this an issue of fairness, but it is also an issue of support for Department activities. Wildlife watching is an increasingly popular activity in Washington State. Cordell and Gregory characterized fish and wildlife watching in their 2000 publication, Trends in Outdoor Recreation, Leisure and Tourism, as, "...one of the most rapidly growing forms of outdoor recreation." Cordell and Gregory reported that only walking in the outdoors surpassed avitourism or bird watching for the average number of days of participation per participant. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's reports that participants spent about a billion dollars directly on fish and wildlife watching activities in Washington State. If WDFW can gain support from the growing segment of its customer base, it will be in a better position to respond to the growing demands being put on the Department.